TOPICS OF THE STAGE AS VIEWED IN WASHINGTON

Against Lithographs

Disfavor of Theater Managers for Poster Advertising and the Motive Behind It. An Unsuspected Saving.

"The New York Theater Managers' Association has declared against the lithograph and the accompanying ticket evil. This is a wise and commendable move. If the window displays are abolished it will cut off at least 15,000 deadheads a week from the theaters of this city, and give a quietus to the cut-rate ticket trade.

"The result should be a decided gain in receipts. The experiment has been tried in Boston and other cities with excellent effect. It will save money for both the theater managers and the attractions."

So writes the diligent scribe of the "Dramatic Mirror." A great deal more is said—on the subject of newspaper advertising and other phases of theatrical publicity—but that need not be considered here. There is enough to talk about in the lithograph.

Without the knowledge of many theatergoers Washington has also a theater managers' association. Here, whatever may be the case in New York, it is a valuable organization which contributes to the advantage of actors, theatergoers, and managers. Its present head is Mr. Rapley, of the National Theater. Its sessions are rare. When it does meet it is to unite on some course which shall inure to the advantage of every theater in Washington; and when the reader reflects on the variety of entertainment thus to be served, the conflict of interests, and the wide divergence of views it will be plain that this body can move wisely only by serving the genuine interests of the theaters and their patrons.

Coming Close to Home.

Not long ago this body considered the question of lithographs. At that time at least 5,000 posters announced each week the coming attractions at the theaters. These lithographs represented two channels of expense—the cost of producing and posting, and the value of the seats given in return for the space they occupied in show windows. After a full discussion it was agreed those two items of expense represented no adequate return either to the house manager or the visiting manager, and it was voted to discontinue them. Another subject was brought into the discussion as a corollary of the first—billboard advertising. A similar conclusion was reached there—that wherever possible the theaters would discontinue the use of billboards; and in lieu of lithographs and "boards" it was decided to advertise in the newspapers.

How much all this represents to the theatergoer is, of course, the main question. If it is merely a measure of judicious economy, the man who pays for his seat is interested only by indirection. If, however, it touches him and his entertainment without circumlocution, it is worth his serious attention.

Well, it does touch him directly. In the first place, he finds himself sitting, these days, among others who have paid the same price for their seats as he has paid for his. In the second place, it has relegated the show window to its proper basis as a place for the display of mercantile wares. In the third place, it has withdrawn support from the billboards, one of the most outrageous affronts on a landscape ever perpetrated. Lastly, it has increased the revenue of both visiting manager and house manager, and so has contributed to the means which can be spent—whether they are so spent or not—on providing first-class companies in first-class plays.

Many a Nickle.

If this move affected Washington alone it might not accomplish much for the improvement of the American stage. As long as lithographs must be printed some outlay is unavoidable. But corresponding action has been taken in scores of other cities—Minneapolis, St. Paul, Cleveland, Cincinnati, St. Louis, and Baltimore among others—and is spreading every day. Already the outlay for lithographs has been reduced more than one-third. In another season it will have fallen to less than one-third.

This is a saving which would make a merchant blink his eyes. The cost of lithographs averages about $200 a week. The average season includes about forty weeks. The total apportionment for this advertising, then, is about $5,000 and the saving already accomplished is not less than $2,500 for each company. Yet in Washington, the patronage has not fallen, but actually increased. Imagine the effect if the investiture of the usual "popular price" company were allowed $2,500 extra at the beginning of the season.

But the gain through the sale of seats is not less noteworthy. There used to be each week about 5,000 passes issued on this account. These passes represented in potential sales not less than $3,750 a week. Consider the effect if that sum—$150,000 for the year—were spent in beautifying our Washington play houses!

Some one will object, "Oh, but the managers won't spend that saving on their playhouses in that way. They'll just put it in their pockets and the playgoer won't have gained a cent." The objector ought to think twice. Perhaps this manager will not reinvest his saving, but that one will. In a season or two the one theater is dingy and the other "sumptuous." In half a dozen seasons the tide of public patronage will have taken a new direction. And if this sounds like romancing it can be verified at any theater in Washington.

The substitute adopted speaks for itself. We who make newspapers think them a vastly superior product to the lithograph. We think they find a hundred thoughtful readers to one for the billboard. We think they reach the readers of every class—as witness the fact that not one of the lower-priced theaters in Washington has suffered through the discontinuation of lithograph advertising. We think an advertisement which can be changed every day is better than one which cannot be changed at all. We think, last of all, that an advertisement which a man can read or not as he chooses is vastly to be preferred to one which disfigures the landscape and breaks through a man's thoughts only to make him angry. And so we are glad that the New York Theater Managers' Association has seen the light at last.

A. D. A.

Past and Future.

Miss Bingham's new play, "Olympe," and the annual engagement of the Bostonians rather swamp "The Girl With the Green Eyes" and "Foxy Grandpa," the other theaters continuing with bills like those of the past week. With Mr Mansfield's "Ivan, the Terrible" still prospective, and half a dozen other good

AMELIA BINGHAM, starring in "Olympe" and "The Frisky Mrs. Johnson."

plays to come, it appears that the late spring in Washington is to be pleasantly beguiled at the theaters. All of which, as they say in the courts, is prayfully submitted.

"The Girl With the Green Eyes" suffered from anti-climax. Miss Bloodgood and her capable company served it loyally. The star, indeed, gave genuine pleasure, and promised interesting enactments for the future. It was Mr. Fitch who failed; and he failed exactly as the machine fails to rival handlabor. The scarcity of good plays in a day when everybody is writing plays is a proof that good ones cannot be made easily. Like writing a book or music, playwriting seems to be within the reach of every half-trained mind, but is really beyond most well-trained minds. Even with preparation in abundance—and Mr. Fitch has been abundantly prepared—time and contemplation are still needed. "The Girl With the Green Eyes" would have been much helped by those two commodities.

"Foxy Grandpa" is a laughable "East Lynne." Age cannot wither the latter or stale its infinite variety. Through war and pestilence, peril and famine, it goes on serenely. It is even to reappear locally at the Lafayette. And in a thousand years some jovial successor to the jovial Joe Hart will appear on the ruins of the Capitol and present a version of "Foxy Grandpa."

Almost enough has been said of the prospective bills. It is a pleasure, always, to welcome Miss Bingham, because, whatever the merit of her play, she heads one of the most even and consistent high-grade companies on our stage. The Bostonians have decided to defer singing their new opera, on the ground that it is only about half rehearsed. They will present, therefore, our old friends, "Robin Hood" and "The Serenade." Good luck to them! Miss Blair's engagement goes on prosperously at the Lafayette, even without the staircase in "Sapho." Chase's resumes its proper function, free both from the expensive Vesta Tilley and the disconcerting Daughters of the Revolution. The three other theaters go on like Tennyson's brook.

Musically, the week obtains prominence from the Sunday evening Symphony, tonight's offering of the Boston Festival Orchestra, and the Strauss concert. Dr. Strauss is to have the valuable aid of Mme. Strauss, Anton Kaspar—one of the best violinists to be heard these days—and Dr. Wrightson, dean of the West Virginia Conservatory of Music, through whose agency the Strauss engagement was arranged. We cannot forget that Dr. Strauss is the foremost composer alive.

How's business? Good!

At the Theaters.

National—Amelia Bingham in Two Plays.

Fashions change in plays as well as in gowns, so Amelia Bingham, the only actress-manager on the American stage, is giving a different style of entertainment this year from that with which her talent has been chiefly concerned of late years. Her latest production, "Olympe," in which she will be seen at the National next week on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday nights and Saturday matinee, is a drama of the period of Louis XV of France, and affords Miss Bingham an admirable vehicle for the display of her versatile, histrionic gifts, and is also one of the most beautiful and costly productions of the season. Miss Bingham has always surrounded herself with the strongest supporting company experience and good judgment could select.

At the Wednesday matinee and Saturday night, Miss Bingham will be seen in Clyde Fitch's amusing comedy, "The Frisky Mrs. Johnson," which deals principally with the lighter side of cosmopolitan life abroad and has been depicted by Mr. Fitch in his most engaging manner. The scenes are laid in Paris in Carnival time and the personages are those of the American colony. This comedy has been one of the most successful of Miss Bingham's play.

In her support during this engagement are four prominent leading men—Henry Woodruff, J. H. Gilmour, Creston Clarke, Edgar L. Davenport—and twenty-five others. The productions will be brought here direct from New York and every detail of the metropolitan scenery, costume and effects will be reproduced here.

Columbia—The Bostonians.

The annual engagement in Washington of the Bostonians will begin tomorrow night at the Columbia Theater, when two bills will be presented. Those are to be "The Serenade," by Victor Herbert, which will be presented on Monday evening, and De Koven and Smith's ever-popular "Robin Hood."

The fame of the Bostonians has lasted through many seasons, and each year the popular organization is generously patronized. In presenting two of its former successes the management of the organization is acceding to the undoubted wish of all its admirers, and both operas promise to bring out large audiences.

In selecting the members of the cast for the current season the management has obtained the services of a group of well-known operatic people, and it is said that the coming engagement at the Columbia will be one of the most interesting in the history of the Bostonians.

Chase's—Polite Vaudeville.

The lights of polite vaudeville will shine at Chase's anew this week. The bill will present as its leading attraction M'lle Capell, the equestrienne trainer, whose equine act was said to be a great sensation in the European hippodromes last year. She will present her blooded Arabian horse, Gentleman, in his "high school exhibition of equine sagacity, docility, and grace," assisted by her kennel of Russian hunting hounds. It is said to be the leading novelty of its kind, and to be given on the stage with better results than it was with a circus. Digby Bell, the well-known comic opera comedian, will pay Chase's a visit after a long absence, during which he was with the De Wolf Hopper company in "Mr. Pickwick." Stuart Barnes, the third of the list, is expected to make a hit of unusual proportions, in view of the success that has attended his specialty everywhere this season. Robertus and Wilfredo, European equilibrists and jugglers; Snyder and Buckley, with their instrumental act; the Mohrens, swinging trapeze performers; Smith and Powell, premier dancers, and motion picture of Derby Day scenes in England complete the offerings.

Lafayette—Miss Blair in "The Crust of Society."

Eugenie Blair will this week appear as Mrs. Eastlake Chapel in, "The Crust of Society." Mr. Gressitt determined to make this change in the character of his offering in order to give Miss Blair's Washington admirers an opportunity of seeing her in the role of a woman of the world, grande dame, and accustomed to the conventional exactions of the upper set of London society life.

Mr. Keenan will play the part of the friend, Oliver St. Aubyn, former lover to Mrs. Chapel. Edward Mulkay will play Capt. Randall Northcote, whom Mrs. Chapel loves. Joseph Eggenton has the role of the Earl of Colchester and S. Cabel Halsey that of Cavandish Comyns.

Among the women Mrs. Echo as played by Emily Dodd will be next in importance to the star. Miss Dodd has been especially engaged by Mr. Gressitt for this part. She was formerly leading woman for Henry Miller. Katherine De Barry will also have a chance to distinguish herself as a grande dame in the part of Lady Downe, while Gertrude Stanley will appear in an excellent role as Violet Esmond.

Academy—"Hearts of Oak."

It is said there is not a single human emotion that is not stirred when one witnesses James A. Herne's "Hearts of Oak," or "Shore Acres." "Hearts of Oak," with a cast which includes E. P. Sullivan, J. Leonard Clark, Albert C. Wahle, Herbert Jones, Francis Cochran, and Misses Bernardine Risse, Mabel Leslie, Jane Kirby, Helen Kirby, and Baby Kirby, will be the attraction at the Academy all this week with matinees Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday.

Popular Symphony Concert.

The twelfth popular concert by the Washington Symphony Orchestra under Reginald de Koven will be given tonight at Chase's Theater. These concerts are greatly increasing in popularity, and the program selected for this evening will be fully up to the usual high standard instituted by the management of the orchestra.

The two soloists will be Mary Emily King, the attractive and well-known violinist of this city, and Marie von Webber Muller, the brilliant soprano, whose charming voice is so well liked and admired both in this country and in Canada.

The entire program follows:

Overture, "Light Cavalry".....Suppe
Violin solo, "Romanza".....Svendsen
Miss Mary Emily King.
(a) Caprice, "Heart's Message."
Santleman
(b) "Funeral March Marionette".Gounod
The Nations.....Moskowski
1 Italy. 2. Germany. 3. Spain.
"Marche Persane".....Strauss
(a) "Virgin's Prayer," string orchestra .....Massenet
(b) Dance in old style.....Gillet
Aria, "Jewel Song" from "Faust."
Gounod
Miss Muller.
Selections, "Mikado".....Sullivan
Waltz, "Wiener Blut".....Strauss

Boston Festival Orchestra.

With Clara Sexton, soprano; Florence Mulford, contralto; Holmes Cowper, tenor; Gwilym Miles, baritone; Frederic Martin, basso, the Boston Festival Orchestra will give a concert at the New National Theater tonight.

This body of instrumental performers has been under the baton of Emil Mollenhauer long enough to acquire that one-man quality of tone-massing so necessary in orchestral work, and so rarely found except in the great orchestras of Europe, which are a part of the civic government, and which thrive by virtue of municipal and government support.

A full complement of fifty men enables the Boston Festival Orchestra to present the broadest and greatest orchestral works, and the unusual quality of the string section furnishes a total strength and excellence said to be not excelled by any orchestra in America. Of the artists engaged for the present season, Clara Sexton, Florence Mulford, Holmes Cowper, and Frederic Martin will be heard in the third act of "Faust" in concert form, which will comprise the second part of tonight's recital.

The first part of the concert will embrace a selected program by the orchestra and solos by Gwilym Miles, who recently appeared in this city, and Silvio Risegari, the eminent pianist.

The box office will be open from 1 o'clock today. Popular prices will obtain.

Olmsted-Berry Recital.

The compositions by Stanley Olmsted to be given their initial presentation at the Washington Club, 1710 I Street, tomorrow evening at 8:15, follow the ultra-modern school. Mr. Olmsted is a creator in a varied sense, being the author of a novel, "The Nonchalante," which treats of musical life on the Continent, and which will make its appearance some time next month. The songs on the program for tomorrow were written with the help of Mrs. Berry, and Mr. Olmsted hastened the present recital in order that he might have Mrs. Berry's co-operation. The occasion should prove eminently artistic, as Mr. Olmsted's program covers a wide range of piano music, and Mrs. Berry's numbers are sure to prove popular.

Richard Strauss Washington Concert.

The Richard Strauss concert will take place next Tuesday at the National Theater, 4:30 p. m. Richard Strauss himself and Mme. Pauline Strauss de Ahna will play and sing. Sydney Lloyd Wrightson Dean, of the Music College of West Virginia, will recite "Enoch Arden," which the composer has set to music, and Anton Kaspar, of Washington, will play the violin part of a favorite sonata for violin and piano, which will form part of the program. The event is being looked forward to with intense interest as the musical feast of the year.

Large social and official interest attaches itself also to the event. Many reservations have been made and the theater is not large. It behooves all who are interested to see to the matter of placement as speedily as possible.

Richard Strauss is by Germans compared to Beethoven, and his name is linked everywhere with that of Richard Wagner. As conductor he has held the most important posts in Europe, first as assistant conductor to von Bulow, who really started Strauss on his conducting career, then as conductor of the Meiningen Orchestra, as third conductor, at Munich, under Lev and Fischer, as court kappelmeister at Weimar, as operatic director, and as kappelmeister of the court opera at Munich, and in succession to von Bulow to the conductorship of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.

In 1894 in Weimar he produced his own opera, "Guntram," a three-act opera, which has had success. It was written while he was traveling, one act in Egypt, another in Sicily, and yet another in Bavaria, his home. Libretto and music were both written by himself. The heroine of the opera was sung by Fraulein Pauline de Ahna, daughter of a Bavarian general, who had studied music against the wishes of her family, and was prepared for the stage by Richard Strauss, whom she later married. The wife of Dr. Strauss is a skilled lyric artist, which adds greatly to her power now of interpreting the songs of her husband. The fact of her success on the stage and that it was he who taught her, is a source of great pride and pleasure to the grave composer, who never alludes to it without a smile.

Empire—"A Break for Liberty."

In the play, "A Break for Liberty," which comes to the Empire this week the author has taken for the foundation the life, trial, and escape of the Biddle brothers.

Lyceum—"Jolly Grass Widows."

"The Jolly Grass Widows," Robert Fulton's road show, will be the card at the Lyceum Theater during the week beginning Monday matinee, April 25.

A two-act farce comedy styled "One Night and Gone" will be the chief number of the program. In the roster of the company will be Joe Howard, Nat Fields, Alex Carr, Guy Rawson, Marie Theresa, Mae Hilliard, Ruth Everett, Butler and Montrose, and the San Francisco Four.

Stage a Safeguard.

Woman More Sheltered When an Actress Than in Society.

By AMELIA BINGHAM.

The society drama is responsible for the rush to the stage of dozens of young women who think they are destined to become great artists. They are women, as a rule, who live idle, restless lives, and who want excitement of some sort, they scarcely know what, and who, having seen the life of an actress only across the footlights, think that it is the ideal life. To every woman who has a home and does not need to make her own living, I say "keep off the stage." Not because it is so bad, but because it is so hard. No one who has not tried can possibly appreciate the hardships, the self-sacrifice, the work, and the bitter disappointment that every actress who succeeds must undergo; and not every woman possesses the strength in body and spirit.

With the woman who has her living to make, it is all quite a different matter, and I advise her to choose the stage as a profession in preference to all others—but only, of course, if she have marked dramatic ability. The work is hard, but so is all paying work for some women, and the compensation is better than in any other calling she could possibly choose. In addition to her fitness, that woman also has a claim on whatever opportunities there may be in preference to her with whom acting is but a fancy or a fad.

As to the moral influences of stage life upon its recruits from society, I believe it is impossible to come to general conclusions. It all depends upon the individual. Again, silly women will be misled by flattery, whether she is on the stage or in society; but I think she has more protection on the stage and is safer there than in the life of a gay social set. The door closes upon the personal life of an actress, and no door is so hard to pass as the stage door. Behind that the woman who is really serious in her purpose can make her life as exclusive as she wishes, and she will find shelter, sympathy, and encouragement.

A woman who is keenly on the lookout for temptation will find it anywhere, and nowhere more readily than

AGNES CAIN BROWN, prima donna with the "Bostonians."

in society, where men and women spend their lives in search for amusement, and where every man is expected to say secret things to women, and where the whole atmosphere is one of idle pleasure and excitement.

I care not what the circumstances; blood, virtuous or otherwise, will tell, and the same woman will stand or fall, whether on the stage or in some other vocation or in her own home. It is an error and unjust to say that the morals of actresses, as a class, are different from those of other women. The stage is made up of people of all sorts of temperament, education, and antecedents, as they are everywhere in the world, and their lives are no better, no worse, on the whole; though possibly they are better on the stage in most cases because of the constant work and its absorbing interest.

I am speaking of the honestly ambitious ones, not the triflers. The latter are not actresses, and never will be. When anyone points to a gorgeously-gowned chorus girl, who drives in her victoria and uses her profession as a blind, I am reminded of the injustice of comparing her with the girl who struggles and tries, and who, by much suffering, much hard work, and a little luck, really becomes an actress and earns the recognition she deserves from every fair-minded man and woman, whether she comes from the ranks of fashionable society or from humble life.

Vaudeville for Red Cross.

Performers at Chase's Will Contribute Their Mites.

The polite vaudeville bill at Chase's Theater this week will play an important part in the garden party and fair to be given next Tuesday and Wednesday evenings by Countess Cassini, the niece of the Russian ambassador, the funds to be given to the Red Cross Society for the benefit of "friend and foe" alike. The following correspondence consummated the wishes of both Countess Cassini and Mr. Chase:

Washington, D. C., April 19, '04.
Dear Countess Cassini:

Holding in the very highest esteem your efforts to aid the Red Cross Society by giving a garden party April 26-7, the funds to be used for the benefit of "friend and foe" alike, I desire to tender to you the eight boxes in my theater for Monday eevning's performance, May 2. These boxes can be sold at your garden party at auction, and a very considerable sum should be realized.

In the event of your acceptance kindly advise and I will see you at your pleasure and convenience for the arrangement of details. Very sincerely,

P. B. CHASE.

To this Countess Cassini replied as follows:

Russian Embassy,
1500 Rhode Island Ave., 15—4—1904.

My Dear Mr. Chase:

You very generously offered me your boxes for Monday night of the 2d of May, the receipts to be added to the Red Cross fund. I most cordialily thank you for your most kind offer, but may I ask you instead to let me have some of your artists for the evening of the 26th instant, believing that this would constitute a great attraction among the features of the fair?

Thanking you very heartly for what you proposed to do and for what you will do in the future, I am, sincerely yours,

CSSE. MARGUERITE CASSINI.

On behalf of Mr. Chase the following reply was made:

Washington, D. C., April 16, 1904.

Dear Countess Cassini:

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your favor of the 15th instant addressed to Mr. Chase. He is now absent from the city and will not return until May, but I desire to suggest that if you will have a representative here to witness the performance Monday matinee, April 25, it can then be determined what numbers would be suitable for your use, and then I can be seen and will assist in the arrangement. Very sincerely,

(Miss) H. WINNIFRED DE WITT.

The Bostonians' Plans.

Well-Known Opera Company Announces Radical Changes.

Recently an unfounded report that the Bostonians were to discontinue business after their quarter-century career was circulated from a Western city, and given wide publicity in papers throughout the country. The prestige of the "Bostonians" is too valuable to throw away. Accordingly, Lawrence J. Anhait, press representative of the company, speaking for Mr. Loudon G Charlton, the managing director, outlines the policy of the company for next season as follows:

"The only change in policy contemplated by the directors, the organization being now a corporation, is in the future to provide a separate organization for each new opera produced and to make as many productions as is warranted by each success. For these productions the best talent available will be used, regardless of former or present connection with the organization. The personnel of the present company is the strongest the Bostonians has had for years, and the majority of these artists will fit admirably in the new pieces to be produced.

"But in order to continue the use of 'Robin Hood,' a property that in thirteen years of steady use has played to over $2,500,000 in gross receipts in something like 2,400 performances, and at the same time to relieve Henry Clay Barnabee from the necessity of playing long seasons of forty or more weeks with the new organizations producing new operas, necessitating arduous travel and discomfort, it is proposed to surround Mr. Barnabee with a company which will play only 'Robin Hood' for a limited season each year, booked in accordance with Mr. Barnabee's personal wishes regarding the length of season, choice of stands and character of houses suitable to the continuance of 'Robin Hood's' success.

"It is obvious that a policy which will serve the requirements of Mr. Barnabee and his 'Robin Hood' company for a limited season in restricted territory will not be at all suitable for the new company or companies playing new pieces; hence the change to separate companies.

"Thus, instead of disintegrating or contracting their sphere of usefulness, the corporation will expand in several directions, and while new successes are being worked out the old success can be continued."

Actors and Interviews.

The Matinee Girl Gives Mummers a Few Points.

One point on which the dear mummer is much in the clouds is what to do with the newspaper folk.

Of one thing he is sure, the newspaper folk are useful, but how to manage them—that is the question.

If he have superfine sensibilities he refuses to cultivate those whom he would choose for friends, lest he be voted self-seeking. If overmuch commercialism, or an indiscreet ambition, has blunted his perceptions he is liable to be too brutally frank in his invitation to the scribe to "do something for him."

If he occupies the happy middle ground between these States, he admits he doesn't quite know what to do.

The situation isn't so complicated nor the answer as difficult as you imagine, good friends of the boards. Newspaper Row isn't so far removed from the polite world but that, with rare exceptions, the rules of one govern the other.

Merely Human Beings.

Cousin Maud, who has been a newspaper woman for eight yearss, and who is as successful as she is sick of it, says:

"Tell actors to treat newspaper men and women as they would anyone else. If they want stories from you they'll tell you so. If they don't you can't cram one down their throats, so don't try. You'll only have a sense of defeat and their dislike for your pains. It is quite probable that, for the moment, they have forgotten your craft, so in heaven's name let them forget theirs. Don't talk shop. And don't pose. They are the quickest people in the world to detect the artificial."

Cousin Maud says that a clever actress who should have known better told her that a newspaper woman and two friends came behind the scenes, and chatted about the play.

"What should I have done?" the actress asked. "I hadn't the least idea what to do. I had the impression she wanted something."

Maud's cheeks flamed an angry red, a warning signal that her poor family always heed.

"You might have handed her some money on general principles." The words clicked between Maud's teeth like the rhythmic click of the typewriter, but the obtuse woman, with the beautiful eyes, heeded not.

"I suppose I might," she responded. "I thought of it, but I wasn't sure whether she would like it."

Out of the wreck and storm of Maud's